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American Art Journal.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 1867.

PUBLICATION OFFICE, 806 BROADWAY.

INAUGURATION OF THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC.

As we write this, the fashionable world is deep in the mysteries of dressing—silks and velvets, laces and diamonds are vying with each other in making brilliant and gorgeous the beauty that is to dazzle and fascinate the happy owners of tickets of admission to the grand Bal d'Opera at the Academy of Music to-night. As we gaze upon the stupendous proportions of our ticket, which lies before us, we are awfully impressed with the magnitude of the occasion; but we think that the Ball itself will dwarf the ticket into nothingness by the unquestionable elegance of the refined and exclusive guests. We understand that if the demands for tickets had been complied with, the Academy of Music could have been thrice filled; but no more tickets have been sold than will comfortably fill the house, while leaving ample space for dancing.

It will assuredly be a brilliant affair, and will be held as a happy augury of a brilliant and prosperous season. It is like writing the name of an old friend to pen the Academy of Music, and we are satisfied that thousands will enter its portals rejoicing that the home of pleasant memories is restored.

Of the Bal d'Opera and the house, and the doings there, we shall give a full account next week, the affair occurring too late to admit of a notice in this issue of the ART JOURNAL.

Our readers should bear in mind that the opening of the Operatic Season is fixed for Thursday evening, March 7th, and also, that all who would be present upon that delightful occasion should secure their tickets at the earliest possible moment, for the rush to be present will be very great indeed. The people are thirsting for Italian Opera, and all will be eager to drink the first draught at that fountain of music, fashion and refinement.

THEODORE THOMAS'S FOURTH SYMPHONY SOIREE.

The fourth of this popular series of Soirees was given at Steinway Hall last Saturday evening, before a large and appreciative audience, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather.

The programme was as follows:

"Suite" in Canon Form, Grimm; March and Chorus, "Ruins of Athens," Beethoven, Mendelssohn Union and Orchestra; Episode from Lennau's "Faust"—Mephisto Waltz—Liszt.

2d PART.—Symphony "Eroica," Beethoven.

The composition by Grimm is in many respects beautiful, while it is altogether curious, from the fact that it is a large orchestral piece written solely for the stringed instruments. The experiment is to a certain extent a success, although from a want of coloring it is almost impossible to avoid monotony. Then again, being literally a quartette with the parts many times duplicated, the performance requires all that delicacy, refinement and oneness, which the Quartette proper demands, a requirement which cannot be expected from so many players of different degrees of efficiency. Still the "Suite" was very cleanly and spiritedly played, and gave general satisfaction.

The March and Chorus was orchestrally effective, but vocally a failure. The Mendelssohn Union turned out just half a hundred strong, and tried their best to make themselves heard, but the failure was very decided. Whoever directs the destinies of the Mendelssohn Union, is following the surest plan to bring it into disrepute, and to disgust the members to a point where the whole affair will break up. The course pursued must be unpopular, or the members would surely come forward for the honor of the Society, and represent its best strength on public occasions. As it is, each public appearance this season has been a failure. We regret this heartily, for the Society *per se*, is full of young and active members, and is composed of most admirable material, which properly managed, ought to take the lead among the vocal societies of this country.

The Episode from Lennau's "Faust," is one of Liszt's most daring, harum-scarum, flibberty-witchit compositions—a wierd phantasmagoria—a formless night-mare, with gleams of beauty which bring out the deformities in stronger relief. We confess that it is interesting as a musical vagary, but we deny its claim to hold possession of the concert-room. It was read by Mr. Thomas with all possible intelligence, and the orchestra rendered it with fine precision, spirit and effect.

The "Eroica" Symphony was cordially welcomed by all present. Familiar as it is to all, its immortal beauties strike the hearer with the same wonder that impressed them on the first performance. The grandeur of its conception, the majesty of its movement, the freshness and vividness of its thoughts, the ineffable beauty of its melody, the boundless resources of harmony, and the breadth of orchestral development, are evidences of that giant intellect which is to-day far in advance of all who have tried symphony writing—the grandest form of musical thought. The performance was excellent throughout, and each movement was warmly and deservedly applauded. The fourth Symphony Soiree, was, on the whole, a delightful musical entertainment, and was, we should judge, successful in every respect.

ORATORIO MUSIC.

Twenty-five years ago Oratorio music was better understood and better performed in this city than it is to-day. Fifteen years ago, we had two Societies, either of which was large, and more efficient than all our Societies of to-day. Then we had grand vocal concerts weekly, at which the great works of the greatest masters were performed. The "Messiah" was, of course, the great stand-by, but we did not breakfast, dine, and sup upon it. We had "Elijah," "St. Paul," the "Creation," "Israel in Egypt," the "Seven Sleepers," the "Seasons," the "Mount of Olives," the "Last Judgment," &c., &c.; and once we had a whole week of Oratorio!

From these facts it will be seen that New York has fearfully retrograded in the grandest elements of vocal music, and unless some grand change occurs, such, for instance, as the directors being suddenly struck with common sense, we see but very little hope for the immediate future. Still that a grand Choral organization is needed, the extraordinary success which attended the first grand Oratorio on Wednesday evening last, is proof sufficient. Steinway's Hall was crowded to overflowing; not merely the Hall proper, but the small Hall was thrown open and crammed full, and every passage way, and all standing space was occupied by an eager crowd. It is such occasions as these that show the value of the magnificent proportions of the Steinway Hall; it held on that night, we understand, by actual computation, three thousand, five hundred people! And all of those three thousand, five hundred people could hear and see, without effort, and without obstruction. It was a splendid sight to see, and offers convincing evidence that Oratorios properly produced in a Hall of sufficient capacity, would prove a brilliant success. The love of that class of music is strong in our midst, and full support would be given to any organization strong enough in numbers and knowledge, to do justice to the great works of sacred writers.

POZNANSKI'S QUARTETTE SOIREE.—The last of Mr. I. B. Poznanski's Quartette Soirees, will be given at Steck's Concert Saloon, in Eighth Street, near Broadway, on Saturday evening, March 9th. In addition to the admirable quartette playing, in which Mr. Poznanski leads with such distinguished excellence, there will be a striking attraction in the appearance of a new pianist, whose praise is loud in the mouth of every one who has listened to his really superb playing. Mr. Candido Berti has claims as a first class artist, which the world will speedily and gladly recognise, so soon as he makes himself manifest. We look for his debut with much interest, although we are sorry that it will take place at the last of these very delightful soirees.